

Poundstock NDP Steering Group

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**Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026

Dear Matthew

**Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan – SEA and HRA Screening**

As requested I have screened the Poundstock Neighbourhood Development Plan to see whether the plan requires Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

As required by the SEA regulations I produced a screening opinion for the Neighbourhood Plan and consulted the statutory bodies, Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency. I also asked Natural England to confirm whether or not HRA was required under the HRA directive.

Based on the scale of development proposed, Cornwall Council is of the opinion that the Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan is unlikely to have significant effects on the environment or on European Sites and that SEA and HRA is therefore not required.

This view is confirmed by the consultation bodies and I have attached the full screening opinion report for your information. As this is a draft plan, if significant changes or additions are made to your plan I would advise you to have it rescreened.

Yours sincerely,

Gemma Hankins

**Development Officer  
Planning & Housing  
Cornwall Council**

**Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan  
SEA and HRA Screening Report**

**Poundstock NDP  
Pre submission Version (Oct 2025)**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment  
Habitats Regulations Assessment**

**Screening Report**

**January 2026**

# **Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening Report**

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# Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening Report

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This screening report is designed to determine whether or not the Poundstock Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (the NDP) requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. The report also considers whether Habitats Regulations Assessment is required under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive.
- 1.2 The purpose of the NDP is to set out planning policies to be used as part of the development plan, for determining applications in the parish. The plan comprises of 10 policies and defines a development boundary around each of the 3 main settlements in the parish, namely Bangors with Poundstock, Widemouth Bay and Treskinnick Cross along with a medium sized site allocation for affordable housing. The plan's vision is *'The distinctive landscape character of Poundstock will be maintained whilst achieving a balance between the demands for development and the preservation of the surrounding rural and coastal landscapes. New housing will be designed to meet local needs, to respect the environment and to have adequate infrastructure to support it.'*
- 1.3 The legislative background set out below outlines the regulations that require the need for this screening exercise. Section 4, provides a screening assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Neighbourhood Plan and the need for a full SEA or HRA.

## 2. Legislative Background

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 2.1 The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessments legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC and was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, or SEA Regulations. Detailed Guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication 'A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive' (ODPM 2005)
- 2.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 required Local Authorities to produce Sustainability Appraisals (SA) for all local development documents to meet the requirement of the EU Directive on SEA. It is considered best practice to incorporate requirements of the SEA Directive into an SA.
- 2.3 However, Neighbourhood Plans are not Local Development Documents and are not required to be subject to sustainability appraisal by legislation (although it is advisable to carry out some form of sustainability assessment.) Neighbourhood plans

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are produced under the Localism Act 2011. In SEA terms, neighbourhood plans are treated as components of Local Plans. National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) advises that in some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. The Localism Act 2011 also requires neighbourhood plans to be compatible with EU and Human rights legislation, therefore, depending on their content, neighbourhood plans may trigger the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Habitats Directive

- 2.4 Figure 2.1 shows the SEA screening process, and Box 2.1 shows the criteria to be used for the main test that applies to neighbourhood plans, namely whether the plan is likely to have a significant environmental effect.
- 2.5 National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) advises that in some limited circumstances, where a neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, it may require a strategic environmental assessment. Potential triggers may be:
- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
  - the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
  - the neighbourhood plan is likely to have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan

### Habitats Regulation Assessment

2.6 Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is a separate process which is required for all plans and projects which are not wholly directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of a European site's qualifying features. This process also requires screening as a first step to ascertain whether a plan is likely to have significant adverse effects on the integrity of 'European' sites. European sites in Cornwall include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs.).

2.7 HRA focuses on maintaining the 'integrity' of the European Sites, namely their conservation objectives. Table 5.1 lists the European Sites within 10km of the neighbourhood plan; their designated features/habitats; conservation objectives; and vulnerabilities.

### Sustainability Appraisal

2.8 The NPPG explains that there is no legal requirement for a neighbourhood plan to have a sustainability appraisal as set out in section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. However, a qualifying body must demonstrate how its plan or order will contribute to achieving sustainable development. A sustainability appraisal may be a useful approach for doing this.

2.9 This report therefore includes screening for HRA and SEA . Section 3 sets out the HRA screening, and provides that Appropriate Assessment if required. Section 4 shows the

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SEA screening process (fig 2.1), and Box 2.1 shows the criteria to be used for the main test that applies to neighbourhood plans, namely whether the plan is likely to have a significant environmental effect.

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### 3. Habitats Regulation Assessment

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) is a separate process which is required for all plans and projects which are not wholly directly connected with or necessary to the conservation management of a European site's qualifying features. This also requires screening as a first step to ascertain whether a plan is likely to have significant adverse effects on the integrity of 'European' sites. European sites in Cornwall include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs.).

3.2 HRA focuses on maintaining the 'integrity' of the European Sites, namely their conservation objectives. Table 5.1 lists the European Sites within 10km of the neighbourhood plan; their designated features/habitats; conservation objectives; and vulnerabilities.

3.3 HRA screening: Is the Plan, either alone or in combination with other relevant projects and plans, likely to result in a significant effect upon European sites? The table(s) below appraises the effect of allocations or policies within the NDP which have the potential to significantly affect European sites within or with a pathway of impact from the NDP. The precautionary principle must be used when assessing whether adverse effects are significant.

European Site	Designated features	Threats/pressures	Pathways of Impact (arising from development relating to the NDP)	Likely significant effects (including in combination)	Screen in or out
Bristol Channel Approaches SAC	Harbour Porpoise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disturbance from underwater noise</li> <li>• Collision with recreational boat</li> <li>• Commercial Shipping</li> <li>• Tidal installations</li> </ul>	None arising from the NDP. The Bristol Channel Approaches SAC was screened out at Local Plan level.	No	Out
Tintagel – Marsland – Clovelly SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European dry heaths</li> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergrazing</li> <li>• Deer</li> <li>• Invasive species</li> <li>• Forestry and woodland management</li> </ul>	No pathways of impact identified from the NDP.	No	Out

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	British Isles. (Western acidic oak woodland) • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disease</li><li>• Air pollution</li><li>• Game management</li></ul>			
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## Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening Report

### 4. SEA screening

4.1 Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects referred to in Article 3(5) of Directive 2001/42/EC are set out below:

SCHEDULE 1 Regulations 9(2)(a) and 10(4)(a) CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT
<p>1. The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,</li> <li>- the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy,</li> <li>- the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,</li> <li>- environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,</li> <li>- the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).</li> </ul> <p>2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,</li> <li>- the cumulative nature of the effects,</li> <li>- the transboundary nature of the effects,</li> <li>- the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),</li> <li>- the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),</li> <li>- the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,</li> <li>- exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,</li> <li>- intensive land-use,</li> <li>- the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source: Annex II of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC



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<b>Table 4.1 Establishing the Need for SEA</b>		
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Y	Will be 'made' by Cornwall Council and used in decision making as part of the development plan.
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Y	Localism Act 2011
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	N	Annex I and II projects are (typically) large scale industrial and commercial processes – the plan does not deal with this scale of development.
4. Will the PP, in view of its likely effect on sites, require an assessment for future development under Article 6 or 7 of the Habitats Directive? (Art. 3.2 (b)) (See para 4.2 above)	N	See Section 3 on Habitats Regulations Assessment
5. Does the PP Determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Y	The Plan contains land use planning policies to guide development within the parish
6. Does the PP set the framework for future development consent of projects (not just projects in annexes to the EIA Directive)? (Art 3.4)	Y	The NDP will be 'made' and used as part of the development plan for determining planning applications in the Plan area
7. Is the PP's sole purpose to serve the national defence or civil emergency, OR is it a financial or budget PP, OR is it co-financed by structural funds or EAGGF programmes 2000 to 2006/7? (Art 3.8, 3.9)	N	
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	N	<b>See Table 4.2</b>

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<b>Table 4.2 Likely significant effects on the environment</b>	
<b>SEA requirement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The characteristics of plans and programmes, having regard, in particular, to:	
1. the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	<p>The Plan provides local criteria-based policies to control the quality of development within the parish. The plan also draws 3 development boundaries around the main settlements in the parish to indicate where infill and rounding off are acceptable. The plan also allocates one medium sized site for affordable led development of 22 homes.</p> <p>102 dwellings have been built in the parish since 2010, a further 48 dwellings have planning permission and 12 are under construction. The parish has exceeded the Local Plan minimum target for housing growth in the parish.</p> <p>Housing growth figures have recently been significantly increased by the new Government to help address the housing crisis. The NDP allows for further development through the allocated site, infill and rounding off within the 3 settlement boundaries and other development can also come forward through Rural Exception Sites.</p>
2. the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy	The neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan. It does not influence other plans.
3. the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,	The neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan which promote sustainable development. It will be examined against four basic conditions, one of which is whether the plan contributes to sustainable development
4. environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme,	<p>The following environmental problems/sensitivities have been identified in the neighbourhood plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal Vulnerability Zone</li> <li>• Tintagel-Marsland -Clovelly SAC</li> <li>• Boscastle to Widemouth SSSI</li> <li>• County Wildlife Sites - Upton to Bude, Tuckingmill Wood, Millook Woods</li> <li>• Various BAP habitats</li> <li>• AONB</li> <li>• AGLV</li> <li>• 2 Scheduled Monuments</li> </ul>
5. the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-	N/A

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management or water protection).	
Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:	

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6. the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,	The plan period runs until 2030, to align with the Cornwall Local Plan. The plan draws development boundaries to indicate where infill and rounding off is acceptable and allocates one site for affordable led development of up to 22 homes within the settlement of Bangors with Poundstock.
7. the cumulative nature of the effects,	<p>The plan area itself is a rural parish which is not a target for strategic development. The Cornwall Local Plan sets housing targets and delivery is monitored annually. Poundstock falls within the Bude-Stratton Community Network Area which had a minimum housing requirement of 600 homes (total) for the rural parishes the period 2010-2030. Poundstock has seen 102 completed dwellings since 2010 and there are 48 homes with planning permission and 12 under construction. This exceeds the Local Plan minimum target for the parish.</p> <p>Housing growth figures have recently been significantly increased by the new Government to help address the housing crisis. The NDP allows for further development through the site allocation, infill and rounding off within the 3 settlement boundaries and other development can also come forward through Rural Exception Sites.</p>
8. the transboundary nature of the effects,	N/A
9. the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	N/A
10. the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),	The parish has a population of 1,010 (ONS, 2021). As stated above, Poundstock has seen 102 completed dwellings since 2010 and there are 48 homes with planning permission and 12 under construction. The plan directs infill and rounding off development to the main settlements of Bangors with Poundstock, Widemouth Bay and Treskinnick Cross as the most sustainable locations. There is also one medium sized allocation in Bangors with Poundstock.
<p>11. the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,</li> <li>- exceeded environmental quality standards or limit</li> </ul>	<p><i>Please see Appendix 1 for the full baseline review.</i></p> <p><b>Special Areas of Conservation</b></p> <p>Bristol Channel Approaches is located on the coast. The SAC spans the Bristol Channel between the northern coast of Cornwall into Carmarthen Bay in Wales. The site has been identified for the protection of harbour porpoise. The Bristol Channel Approaches SAC was screened out at Local Plan level.</p> <p>Tintagel- Marsland-Clovelly Coast SAC is located in the parish. The site is designated due to the habitats</p>

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<p>values, - intensive land-use,</p>	<p>it provides, specifically for the vegetated cliffs, old sessile oak woods and European dry heaths. The HRA Screening found there were no pathways of impact.</p>
<p>12. the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.</p>	<p><b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</b></p> <p>Boscastle to Widemouth SSSI is located in the Parish. This site is designated for geological and biological reasons. 'Description and Reasons for Notification: This site lies on the North Cornwall coast and comprises a 12 mile section of cliffs and coastal habitats between Boscastle and Widemouth. The cliffs exhibit classic geological exposures of Namurian rocks and Variscan structures; the outstanding biological interest includes the unique Dizzard Oak woodland, maritime heaths and intertidal zones.' Residential development is focused within the settlements of widemouth Bay, Treskinnick Cross and Bangor with Poundstock.</p> <p>The Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) for Tintagel- Marsland-Clovelly Coast SAC covering the parish are not triggered by the type of smaller scale residential development likely to come forward under the NDP policies. This in combination of the level of development likely to come forward under the NDP means that Likely Significant Effects (LSE) are not anticipated.</p> <p>There are numerous other SSSIs within 10km of the parish but the IRZ do not extend to Poundstock.</p> <p><b>County Wildlife Sites</b></p> <p>Upton to Bude County Wildlife Site located on the coast around Widemouth Bay. Tuckingmill Wood is located on the boundary with Jacobstow. Millook Woods straddles the parish boundary with St Gennys to the West.</p> <p>With the exception of Upton to Bude CWS, the sites are away from the villages where residential development will be focused. This in combination with the scale of development likely to come forward under the NDP means that LSE are not anticipated.</p> <p><b>BAP Habitats</b></p> <p>There are several types of BAP habitat within the parish which includes: maritime cliffs and slope; woodland; purple moor grass and rush pastures. The BAP habitats are located away from the 3 development boundaries drawn by the NDP where residential development will be focused and no LSE</p>

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	<p>are anticipated.</p> <p><b>AONB</b></p> <p>Approximately half the Parish is designated as AONB (the west side) and abuts the settlement of Treskinnick Cross. The parish has carried out a Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA) parish which describes in detail the special qualities of the landscape which are important to conserve and enhance to retain the unique locally distinct sense of place. Additionally, NDP policy 8 protects valued landscapes and important views, including the AONB. This in combination with the scale of development likely to come forward under the NDP means that LSE are not anticipated.</p> <p><b>AGLV</b></p> <p>Week St Mary AGLV runs through the Parish and includes the settlements of Bangors and Treskinnick Cross. The site allocation is outside of the AGLV. Bude Coast AGLV abuts the settlement of Widemouth Bay.</p> <p>The parish have carried out a Local Landscape Character Assessment (LLCA) parish which describes in detail the special qualities of the landscape which are important to conserve and enhance to retain the unique locally distinct sense of place. Additionally, NDP policy 8 protects valued landscapes and important views, including the AGLV. Policy 8 also restricts any further development to the west of Marine Drive in Widemouth Bay, other than development for public amenities such as parking, public toilets and showers. This in combination with the scale of development likely to come forward under the NDP means that LSE are not anticipated.</p> <p><b>Scheduled Monuments</b></p> <p>There are 2 scheduled monuments: Camp 330m SSE of Millook and Round Barrow on Millook Common. These are not in close proximity to the three main settlements where development is focused. No LSE anticipated.</p> <p><b>Heritage Coast</b></p> <p>Pentire Point to Widemouth Bay Heritage Coast covers the western side of the parish, skirting the edge of Treskinnick Cross and extending through Bangors with Poundstock. The allocated site lies outside the</p>
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designated Heritage Coast area. As the proposed site allocation does not fall within the designation, and given its contained location within the existing inland settlement pattern, no likely significant effects (LSE) on the Heritage Coast are expected.

Some of the defined development boundaries around Bangors with Poundstock and Treskinnick Cross do, however, fall within the Heritage Coast designation. Given the scale of development anticipated under Policy 1—limited to infill and rounding-off—no LSE on the Heritage Coast are expected beyond what is already provided for through the Local Plan. The parish may wish to consider referencing the Heritage Coast designation within Policy 1, Part 1b

### Historic Environment Record

The HER has been reviewed by Cornwall Council's heritage team in relation to the site allocation at Bangors and this feedback has been provided and will be shared with the parish:

*Looking at the setting and location, I think this is a well selected allocation. It would appear to have minimal impact on any designated features – although this would need to be determined as part of PreApp/HIA and the expected planning processes. I would expect that local distinctiveness would be taken into account when planning any scheme with particular note given to the impact, setting and aesthetic of [MCO32656](#) and the other buildings visible on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS mapping.*

*[MCO77525](#) looks to be a well-preserved track or holloway with associated Cornish hedges. It would be good to see some mention of these features. I note that there doesn't seem to be a right of way associated with the track although it does link to several routeways. It may be worth the NDP investigating the ownership of this feature, any plan that improved accessibility and positive reuse of this undesignated heritage asset would be welcomed.*

### Flooding

The land around the north of the Widemouth Bay development boundary is categorised as Flood Zone 3a (a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding or a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea in any year) and Flood Zone 3b (functional flood plain).

**ACTION** - Cornwall Council to advise Poundstock NDP team to add reference flood zone 3a and 3b

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around Northern edge of Widemouth settlement boundary.

**Coastal Vulnerability Zone**

The coastline of the parish is designated as a coastal vulnerability zone (CVZ). This is reflected in Policy 1 and Policy 10 concerns safeguarding the coast.

## **Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan SEA and HRA Screening Report**

### **5. SEA Screening Outcome**

- 5.1 As a result of the assessment in section 3, it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects on European Sites arising from the Poundstock NDP and Appropriate Assessment (HRA) is therefore not required.
- 5.2 The assessment in section 4 does not reveal any significant effects on the environment resulting from the Poundstock NDP. There are environmentally sensitive areas as detailed in section 4, however they will not be affected because of the small scale of development likely to come forward under the plan. Furthermore, the policy framework exists in Cornwall Local Plan policies 23 and 24 and in the emerging NDP to ensure protection of the environment. SEA is therefore not required.

From: SPDC <SPDC@environment-agency.gov.uk>  
Subject: RE: Poundstock NDP - SEA screening (REGREEN DUE TO SITE ALLOCATION)  
Date: 19 February 2026 at 09:10:03 GMT  
To: Gemma Hankins <Gemma.Hankins@cornwall.gov.uk>

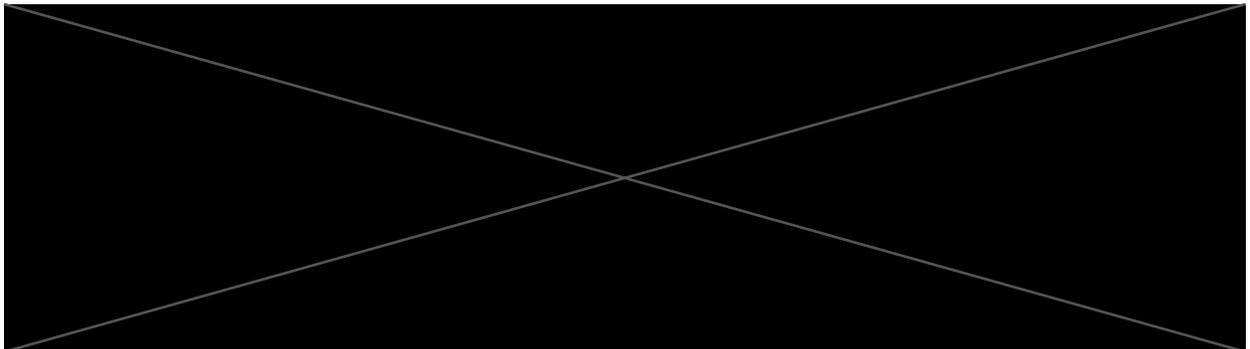
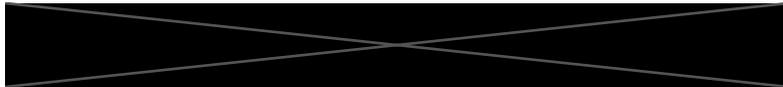
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Hi Gemma

Thank you for the attached updated SEA screening. I have screened the site and can confirm there are no environmental/flood risk issues within our remit resulting from the allocation.

Kind regards  
Mark

Mark Williams  
Planning Advisor - Sustainable Places  
Environment Agency - Devon, Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly



Information Classification: CONTROLLED

From: "Tait, Jerome" [REDACTED]@HistoricEngland.org.uk>  
Subject: RE: Poundstock NDP - SEA screening (REGREEN DUE TO SITE ALLOCATION)  
Date: 12 February 2026 at 18:09:33 GMT  
To: Gemma Hankins <Gemma.Hankins@cornwall.gov.uk>

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Dear Gemma,

Many thanks for consulting us following the updated SEA screening opinion for the Poundstock NDP, this has followed the steering group has since included a medium-sized site allocation. Also thank you for sharing the additional statements below from your colleagues at Cornwall Council to confirm that they have no heritage concerns in principle with this allocation.

I have read all of the associated papers and correspondence and can confirm that we would raise no objection to the view that a full SEA is not required. In respect of the evidencing of site allocation policies, in this instance, we are prepared to defer to the Council's heritage team.

We will reiterate our position in our response to the subsequent Regulation 16 consultation in due course.

Kind regards,

Jerome

From: Harriet Cradick [REDACTED]  
Subject: Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening Opinion Consultation  
Date: 13 February 2026 at 12:28:42 GMT  
To: Gemma Hankins <Gemma.Hankins@cornwall.gov.uk>

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Hi Gemma,

Thank you for consulting Natural England, please see our response attached.

Kind regards,

Harriet Cradick  
Higher Officer - Sustainable Development/Marine  
Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AH



**For information or advice from the Natural England Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Team please email us at:**

[DevonCornwallandIslesofScilly@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:DevonCornwallandIslesofScilly@naturalengland.org.uk)

[www.gov.uk/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/natural-england)



Date: 13 February 2026  
Our ref: 539644  
Your ref: Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan



Cornwall Council Planning Dept,  
New County Hall,  
Treyew Rd,  
Truro, TR1 3AY  
planning@cornwall.gov.uk

Hornbeam House  
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**BY EMAIL ONLY**

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Gemma,

### **Cornwall Council - Poundstock Neighbourhood Plan - SEA Screening Opinion Consultation**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 26 January 2026 which was received by Natural England on 26 January 2026

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

#### **Screening Request: Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)**

**It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that:**

- **significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes are unlikely; and,**
- **significant effects on Habitats sites<sup>1</sup>, either alone or in combination, are unlikely.**

The proposed neighbourhood plan is unlikely to significantly affect any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection areas (SPA), Ramsar wetland or sites in the process of becoming SACs or SPAs ('candidate SACs', 'possible SACs', 'potential SPAs') or a Ramsar wetland. The plan area is unlikely to have a significant effect on a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Heritage Coast, and is unlikely to impact upon the purposes for which these areas are designated or defined.

Guidance on the assessment of Neighbourhood Plans, in line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 is contained within the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). This identifies three triggers that may require the production of an SEA:

- a neighbourhood plan allocates sites for development
- the neighbourhood area contains sensitive natural or heritage assets that may be affected by the proposals in the plan
- the neighbourhood plan may have significant environmental effects that have not already been considered and dealt with through a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Habitats sites are those referred to in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (Annex 2 - glossary) as "any site which would be included within the definition at regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 for the purpose of those regulations, including candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and any relevant Marine Sites".

Natural England agrees that it is unlikely there will be any significant environmental effects on European Sites arising from the Poundstock NDP and Appropriate Assessment (HRA) is therefore not required. It is also accepted that, given the small scale of development anticipated through the plan, the identified environmentally sensitive areas will not be adversely affected. As a result, the existing policy framework within Cornwall Local Plan Policies 23 and 24, together with the emerging NDP, provides sufficient environmental protection. Consequently, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required.

Natural England reserves the right to provide further advice on the environmental assessment of the plan. This includes any third party appeal against any screening decision you may make. If a SEA is required, Natural England must be consulted at the scoping and environmental report stages.

Please send any new consultations, or further information on this consultation to [consultations@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:consultations@naturalengland.org.uk)

Yours sincerely

Harriet Cradick  
Sustainable Development  
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## Annex 1 - Neighbourhood planning and the natural environment: information, issues and opportunities

### Natural environment information sources

The [Magic](#)<sup>2</sup> website will provide you with much of the nationally held natural environment data for your plan area. The most relevant layers for you to consider are: **Agricultural Land Classification**, **Ancient Woodland**, **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, **Local Nature Reserves**, [National Parks \(England\)](#), **National Trails**, **Priority Habitat Inventory**, **public rights of way (on the Ordnance Survey base map)** and **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including their impact risk zones)**. Local environmental record centres may hold a range of additional information on the natural environment. A list of local record centres is available from [the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres](#) .

**Priority habitats** are those habitats of particular importance for nature conservation, and the list of them can be found [here](#)<sup>3</sup>. Most of these will be mapped either as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, on the Magic website or as **Local Wildlife Sites**. Your local planning authority should be able to supply you with the locations of Local Wildlife Sites.

**National Character Areas** (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas. Each character area is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity. NCA profiles contain descriptions of the area and statements of environmental opportunity, which may be useful to inform proposals in your plan. NCA information can be found [here](#)<sup>4</sup>.

There may also be a local **landscape character assessment** covering your area. This is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change in the area. Your local planning authority should be able to help you access these if you can't find them online.

If your neighbourhood planning area is within or adjacent to a **National Park** or **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB), the relevant National Park/AONB Management Plan for the area will set out useful information about the protected landscape. You can access the plans on from the relevant National Park Authority or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty website.

General mapped information on **soil types** and **Agricultural Land Classification** is available (under 'landscape') on the [Magic](#)<sup>5</sup> website and also from the [LandIS website](#)<sup>6</sup>, which contains more information about obtaining soil data.

### Natural environment issues to consider

The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)<sup>7</sup> sets out national planning policy on protecting and enhancing the natural environment. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)<sup>8</sup> sets out supporting guidance.

Your local planning authority should be able to provide you with further advice on the potential impacts of your plan or order on the natural environment and the need for any environmental assessments.

### Landscape

Your plans or orders may present opportunities to protect and enhance locally valued landscapes. You may want to consider identifying distinctive local landscape features or characteristics such as ponds, woodland or dry stone walls and think about how any new development proposals can respect and enhance local landscape character and distinctiveness.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>

<sup>5</sup> <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.landis.org.uk/index.cfm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

<sup>8</sup> <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/>

If you are proposing development within or close to a protected landscape (National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) or other sensitive location, we recommend that you carry out a landscape assessment of the proposal. Landscape assessments can help you to choose the most appropriate sites for development and help to avoid or minimise impacts of development on the landscape through careful siting, design and landscaping.

### Wildlife habitats

Some proposals can have adverse impacts on designated wildlife sites or other priority habitats (listed [here](#)<sup>9</sup>), such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or [Ancient woodland](#)<sup>10</sup>. If there are likely to be any adverse impacts you'll need to think about how such impacts can be avoided, mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for.

### Priority and protected species

You'll also want to consider whether any proposals might affect priority species (listed [here](#)<sup>11</sup>) or protected species. To help you do this, Natural England has produced advice [here](#)<sup>12</sup> to help understand the impact of particular developments on protected species.

### Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

Soil is a finite resource that fulfils many important functions and services for society. It is a growing medium for food, timber and other crops, a store for carbon and water, a reservoir of biodiversity and a buffer against pollution. If you are proposing development, you should seek to use areas of poorer quality agricultural land in preference to that of a higher quality. For more information, see [Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land](#)<sup>13</sup>.

## **Improving your natural environment**

Your plan or order can offer exciting opportunities to enhance your local environment and should provide net gains for biodiversity in line with the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). If you are setting out policies on new development or proposing sites for development, you should follow the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy and seek to ensure impacts on habitats are avoided or minimised before considering opportunities for biodiversity enhancement. You may wish to consider identifying what environmental features you want to be retained or enhanced or new features you would like to see created as part of any new development and how these could contribute to biodiversity net gain and wider environmental goals.

Opportunities for environmental enhancement might include:

- Restoring a neglected hedgerow.
- Creating a new pond as an attractive feature on the site.
- Planting trees characteristic to the local area to make a positive contribution to the local landscape.
- Using native plants in landscaping schemes for better nectar and seed sources for bees and birds.
- Incorporating swift boxes or bat boxes into the design of new buildings.
- Think about how lighting can be best managed to reduce impacts on wildlife.
- Adding a green roof to new buildings.
- Providing a new footpath through the new development to link into existing rights of way.

Site allocations should be supported by a baseline assessment of biodiversity value.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land>

The statutory biodiversity metric should be used to calculate biodiversity losses and gains for terrestrial and intertidal habitats and can be used to inform any development project. We refer you to [Calculate biodiversity value with the statutory biodiversity metric](#) for more information. For small development sites, [The Small Sites Metric](#) may be used. This is a simplified version of the statutory biodiversity metric and is designed for use where certain criteria are met.

Further information on biodiversity net gain including [planning practice guidance](#) can be found [here](#)

You may also want to consider enhancing your local area in other ways, for example by:

- Setting out in your plan how you would like to implement elements of a wider Green Infrastructure Strategy (if one exists) in your community.
- Assessing needs for accessible greenspace and setting out proposals to address any deficiencies or enhance provision. Natural England's [Green Infrastructure Framework](#) sets out further information on green infrastructure standards and principles
- Identifying green areas of particular importance for special protection through Local Green Space designation (see [Planning Practice Guidance](#)<sup>14</sup>).
- Managing existing (and new) public spaces to be more wildlife friendly (e.g. by sowing wild flower strips in less used parts of parks or on verges, changing hedge cutting timings and frequency).
- Planting additional street trees.
- Identifying any improvements to the existing public right of way network, e.g. cutting back hedges, improving the surface, clearing litter or installing kissing gates) or extending the network to create missing links.
- Restoring neglected environmental features (e.g. coppicing a prominent hedge that is in poor condition, or clearing away an eyesore).

Natural England's [Environmental Benefits from Nature tool](#) may be used to identify opportunities to enhance wider benefits from nature and to avoid and minimise any negative impacts. It is designed to work alongside the statutory [Biodiversity Metric](#) and is available as a beta test version.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>